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homemakers' chat

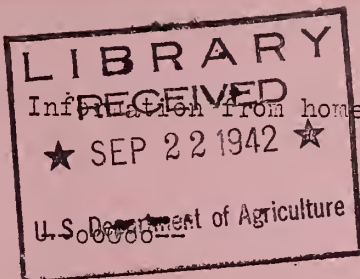
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 1942

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In 3Hh
SUBJECT: "Thrifty Meat Shopping."

Department of Agriculture.



One of the foods to think seriously about these days is meat. In times of war, and stress, and often shortage, even more than in times of peace and plenty, meat is a food to buy with thrift and cook with care. Meat is one of the more expensive foods to produce. So especially in times like these it's important to guard against waste at every step from the butcher's block to the serving platter.

One way to help prevent waste of meat is to use a variety of cuts--to buy many different kinds of meat and--to make plenty of use of the tougher, less expensive cuts. Another way to help prevent waste and make the most of the country's meat supplies is to learn how to cook these cheaper meats so they will appeal to your family. One point every woman should understand before she buys meat for her family is this: The cheaper grades and cuts are just as full of food value and flavor as the expensive cuts. The cheaper grades are fairly lean and not so tender, to be sure. They take more time to cook and prepare, and more skill in seasoning. But if you learn how to use them, the results will be as delicious as any family could ask.

So the first rule for the wise cook who plans to make the most of the meats on the market, and help her own pocketbook--the first rule is: Know your cuts. Cuts differ in tenderness according to the part of the animal they come from, and according to the age and fatness of the animal. Cuts differ also in the amount of bone and gristle they contain, and in the direction the muscles run. All these points affect the price you pay for the cut.

The tender cuts of beef come just from the loin and rib as a rule. These tender cuts make up only about a fourth of the whole beef. The other three-fourths of the beef are the less tender and cheaper cuts--those you'll make good use of, if you're thrifty. From these less tender, economy meats you can have steaks, pot roasts and stews. For steaks here are the economy cuts you can choose from: chuck, shoulder, flank, rump and round. For pot roasts you can use meat from the chuck ribs, cross arm, clod, rump and round. And for stews you can use neck, plate brisket, flank, shank, and heel of round.

Now as for lamb and pork--plump young lamb and pork that is--all the cuts are tender. You don't have to worry about tender and tough cuts with these meats. With veal, the rib and loin are generally more tender than the rest of the animal. The cheaper cuts of lamb, pork and veal are shoulder, breast and shank. And these cheaper cuts make good chops, roasts, pot roasts, and stews.

These names of cuts of meat won't mean much to you unless you know them when you see them. And the best teacher is a reliable meat dealer. Make friends with your butcher. Tell him you want to learn what the different cheaper cuts look like. Arrange to do your marketing at a time of day when he is not too busy to help you. You can also learn a good deal from meat charts and diagrams. You can get free charts showing meat cuts from the U.S. Department, Washington, D.C., and from some State experiment stations. Such charts may differ slightly since different parts of the country have slightly different styles of cutting meat. But the object of all meat cutting from California to Connecticut, from Florida to Idaho is the same--to divide the thickly fleshed parts from the thinly fleshed, and to separate the tender from the less tender cuts for convenience in cooking.

Another good rule for the wise marketer is: Know your grades of meat. The leaner grades of meat are less expensive than the meat with plenty of fat. United States grade marks are a great help in selecting meat. In general, U.S. Commercial

grade is medium fat beef, and U.S. Utility grade is thin beef. Not all meat is marked with the Federal grade stamp but when consumers ask for it, most stores will arrange to carry it. The Government will grade lamb and veal as well as beef if the packer or distributor asks for the service and pays for it. But at present the Government is grading pork only on contract orders.

The third rule for thrifty buying is: Plan your buying ahead. Watch for advertisements for meat sales or "specials" in the newspapers and elsewhere. Take advantage of these specials. Plan your meals well ahead of time. If you have a cold place to keep meat leftover, you save time and also fuel by cooking a larger piece of meat than you need for one meal. Cooked meat is excellent sliced cold. And the little tidbits leftover can make stews, hash, croquettes, curries and many other delicious dishes.

You have to consider the fuel you cook by as well as the price of meat if the final dish is going to be really thrifty. To cut down fuel costs choose meat that you can cook on top of the stove, unless you're cooking by a wood or coal stove used for heating the kitchen, or unless you happen to have an oven that is hot anyway.

That's just the beginning of the story of making the most of meat. More on this another day. In the meantime, just remember the 3 rules of the wise meat shopper: first, know your cuts; second, know your grades; plan your purchases.

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